

## [O Why Were They Born?]

[?] Beliefs and Customs - Folkstuff

5. O WHY WERE THEY BORN? “.. O, steadfast pauper, O, experienced vagrant . . . O, still unopened skeleton, O, tall and handsome target, O. neat, thrifty, strong, ambitious brave prospective ghost. . .”

(This giant of a patriarch with his lean stomach and hard-boned shoulders, waves his lean arms in large preacher-like gestures. He strides around, yells, stops short, whines, intones, rants, barks to the howling amusement of the crowd. His untrimmed hair flows to his shoulders, his heavy grey beard conceals a red mouth, his blue eyes are mean and mischievous and his nose is a hard beak. An actor always, he enjoys the attention, even the contempt, of the crowd, since he is [?] superior to it.) 2,500 words

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Herman Partnow (extra copy, please)

ADDRESS 530 Parkside Avenue

DATE February 13, 1939

SUBJECT Leisure folklore [5 & 1?]

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### 1. Date and time of interview

January-February, 1939

### 2. Place of interview

Union Square.

### 3. Name and address of informant

A group of [?] anonymous people in the park.

### 4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

### 5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

### 6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. 10

O WHY WERE THEY BORN? [RAT GUT, BOOZE AND BEER?] [5?]

SH-A-A-AVEN AND SHO-O-O-ORN!.....

Listen, God desired to [?] put hair on a man's face so he put it there. Woman he desired to make beautiful so he made her face smooth. On man's face he put wonderful ha-a-a-air....GOD made ME a MAN!...SHEEP. SLAVES. ...Where's your individuality? Where's your personality? Where's your singularity?.....WHY were you BORN? Slavery! SLAVERY!...You! Why don't you shave your head, TOO?... [????]. Half men. Women. WOMEN! IMITATION MEN...HOG-eater! SWINE-eater!....Rat-gut. Swine. Booze and BEER.....

O-O-O-OH! SHA-A-A-AVEN A-A-And....SHO-O-O-ORN! (BREAKS INTO SONG)  
They look so pitiful, so sad So miserable, s-o-o-o forlorn... And they wander, o-o-o-h they w-a-a-e-nder O w-hy-y-y-y [?] were they born To be shaven and shorn....

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COWARDS!....COWARDS!... O-O-O-O-H - H-E-E-E is an average man. Go all the world around. [?] Six months in jail and six months out He is an average man.

(MORE. MORE.) They act so very queer When they are full of -

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[RAT GUT, BOOZE AND BEER?] RAT-GUT! SWINE! BOOZE AND BEER! Right here on Union Square..... BAH! In contempt - while the drunken nuts Talk away I-I-I-I just walk away.

(DON'T WALK SO FAST: WE'LL GET BLISTERS ON OUR FEET....HERE, CHICK.

CHICK, CHICK, CHICK, CHICK...) Cowards. Cowards....Sneak! Freak!...Go back to the coffin, all of you.